

Conference topics

Aspects of improving the artist's "own" awareness of his/her own practice and the knowledge it incorporates;

Aspects of insight, understanding and knowing in the work;

Discussion of the processes of making the work/design/music in the context of own and other practices;

Discovery/definition of values in the process of designing/making/doing/performing;

Implications of uncovering the aspects considered as tacit;

Exploration of the tension between the understanding and emotional experience of the work of art or design;

Forms and frames relevant to represent knowledge based on creative practice;

Investigation of the relation between the creative work and its description – interpretation – explanation;

Inwards and outwards communication in designing/music/arts.

SCENE FROM THE (H)EDGE

Hortus Conclusus, the outdoor-room as a thought

Tomas Ooms

LUCA School of Arts, KU Leuven

Tomas.Ooms@Luca-arts.be

Abstract

The Flemish decree of 23/12/1986 on the integration of artwork in public funded projects determines that: 'every public corporation that constructs a project wholly or partially funded with public funds, is obliged to spend a certain pre-defined percentage of the building costs on artworks that is to be integrated in the building'.

This paper/presentation is module V of the project. Previous modules are: Module I: Citizenship & Spaces for Democracy, Research Seminar LUCA School of Arts, Brussels (0905 2012) Module III: A Porosity, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul (0111 2012) Module IV: A Postponed Wall, PBR-GRC, LUCA School of Arts, Ghent (2411 2012) Module VII: '...hors de chez soi...' scheduled at the ASRO Seminar (2404 2013). In 2007 I designed an elderly care project for 70 people in the city of L. The project is realized with public funding. The city of L organized a closed competition to which I was also invited. The design 'Hortus Conclusus, the 'outdoor-room' as a thought' is that competition entry. 'Outdoor-room' became a reflection and 'explicitation' on the elderly care project that I designed and who's construction I supervised. 'outdoor-room' is anchored in the Yard & World research project. This is the tale of the out-door-room as a thought:

Keywords

Design; Architecture; Collective; Public Sphere.

Scene from the (h)Edge

Her senses are fading, but her mind is sharp. She sits in her room and looks at the impressive row of summer oak and chestnut trees skirting the site. When she lifts her head and gently places her hand on the open page of the book in her lap, she sees the garden wall lifted, the space, unlocked, and placed on the edge. It is the outdoor-room on the border, the limit of the terrain, between street and yard. The light changes only slightly as she notices a figure approaching the outdoor-room. The figure moves alongside the hedge and towards the yard. Something familiar about this figure strikes her.

The figure holds her pace and stops. As she notices the hedged yard she is constructing this thought: In a world where more and more people are city dwellers living in a dense context, the relation between the private sphere and the public realm is of an utmost importance. Thinking and designing (for) this relation must be an essential element on how to deal with this increasing density on a spatial level...

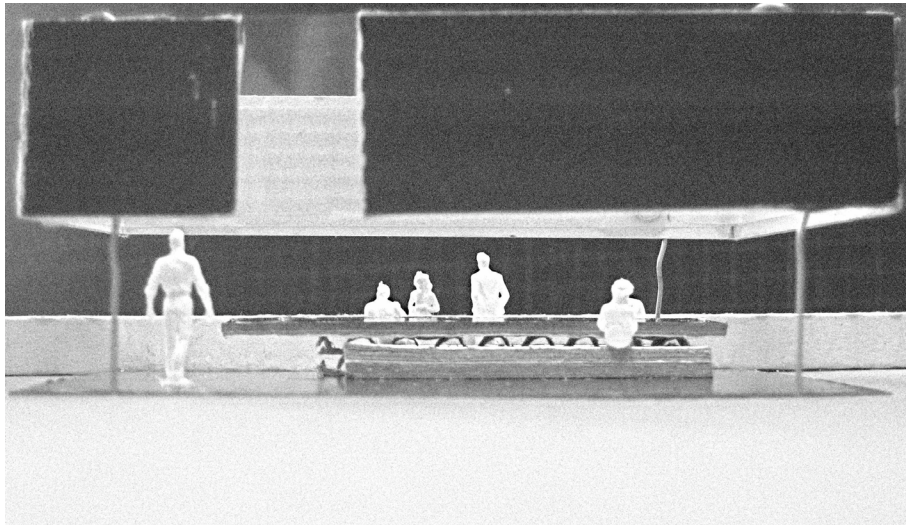


Figure 01
Scene from the (h)Edge, model

Her eyes return to the book she is holding: “Pour le parfait flâneur, pour l’observateur passionné, c’est une immense jouissance que d’élire domicile dans le nombre, dans l’ondoyant, dans le mouvement, dans le fugitif et l’infini. Être hors de chez soi, et pourtant se sentir partout chez soi; voir le monde, être au centre du monde et rester caché au monde”



Figure 02
Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret-Beistegui Apartment, 1929-31

The figure leaves the paved part of the road and walks between the tree trunks on mulched ground. ...In the design practice most of the project due to their nature as being public social programs; have to deal with the relation of the individual and the collective. Reducing this relation to the Boolean description of public (sphere) and private (sphere) limits the richness of nuances, uncertainty and ambiguity of that relation. Manual de Solà-Morales introduced with his text ‘Public and Collective Space’ the concept of the collective, adding another layer to the public-private paradigm. In the design studio (both at the office and in education) the public-private jargon fails short in describing the richness of nuances, uncertainty and ambiguity that is typical for that spatial relation of the individual and the collective...

Her finger marks the passage and she glares at the outdoor-room.

In that instance, the outdoor-room is a mark, at night the inside and the floor light up, in its dimensions the outdoor-room iterates and echo’s the patio of the building she resides in, involuntary. In doing so, the outdoor-room places the heart of the project, a vulnerable gesture, in all openness as an invitation.

The figure now stands in front of the hedge, looks through the yard at the brickwork building...and searches for a broader and more nuanced description of the public-private dichotomy. The designerly debate (or depicted polemic) on the public and private sphere is mainly happening on the level of public projects. The figure aims at (temporarily?) re-locating this debate in the private domain, as a kind of ‘assess-re-localization’ or ‘hyper-liberalization’.



Figure 03
1748 Map of Rome marking interiors as public space

The figure considers the character of the public sphere as the responsibility of the private domain, private projects, and private client. Through design the project probes how the relation of the individual and the collective can architecturally be understood, expressed, modified, stimulated, accommodated.



Figure 04
Le Lavoir de d'Arbonne la Foret as a meeting point outside the spatial scope of the household

Her eyes fixed on the figure standing at the verge, now. Because of her reduced senses and mobility her means of communicating are fewer. Therefore she relies on others to move into her world. She hopes. And she places her hope as a bet. She gambles her senses. The outdoor-room wants to offer her and the other inhabitants and their family an extra space, and situates itself in the vicinity of the path that circumambulates the yard and moves in the town center. The outdoor-room allows itself to be a place for a garden party or may be merely the intent of a walk.

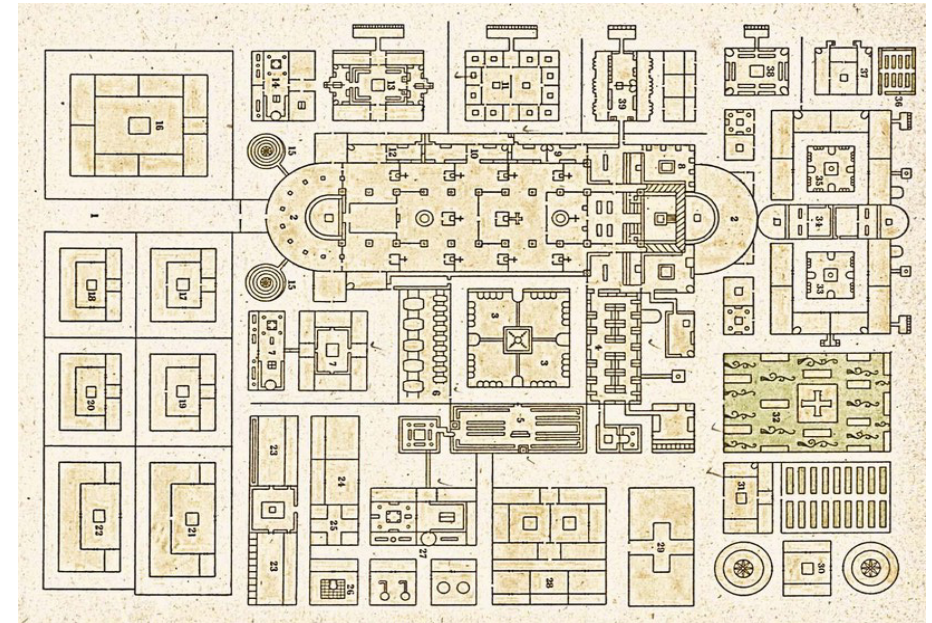


Figure 05
Sankt-Gallen A walled garden building a relation with the eternal sky

The figure notices in one of the windows an older woman sitting in a sofa and looking out in to the yard. This prompts a quote by Paul de Wispelaere: “This house is his shell and his lookout, it is between yesterday and tomorrow, between birth and rebirth, between yard and world, between a moment and time, between myth and profane history, between silence and the screaming and bleating that echoes over the world.”

The figure tries through a collection of modules, to explore the design possibilities of introducing a specific understanding and designing of the relation between the public (sphere) and the private (sphere), between individual and the collective, between space and space, between yard and world. The focuses would be on the ‘dual’, the ‘liminal’, the ‘gaard’ (proto-germanic gardaz: enclosure), the threshold-world on the notion ‘that a universe comes into being when a space is severed or taken apart’.

Her hand places the book on the wooden table on her right. As she tries to get up she uses the table as a support. She moves so quiet and self-controlled and yet uncertain. The outdoor-room and the figure are both in her field of view. Being on the edge, the outdoor-room approaches the passer-by, invites the passer-by, above all that’s the whole point: to firmly anchor her world in the community.

The figure hesitates and doubts. It is not about a yard versus the world but what she does should acts as a concept, a notion, a representation of an enclosed / marked / identifiable space that is located in the world, outside of itself, “...hors de chez soi...”

and on itself, per se, “...se sentir partout chez soi...”. “...voir le monde, être au centre du monde et rester caché au monde,...”.

A paradoxical simultaneity that is typical for so many medieval miniatures she remarks. And as with some of the paintings of Pieter De Hoogh, several yards can be nested in several world, creating a depth, an ‘enfilade’.



Figure 06
Cité des Dames» Christine de Pisan: A paradoxical simultaneity.

The figure wants to discover whether this kind of severed or nested spaces, spaces of doubt, play or can play a role in the spatial relation of the individual and the collective. In doing so, the figure aims at producing designs and reflections that act as narratives of the city that question and investigate alternative models of collective living on the edge of the individual and the collective, between public and private, between space and space, between yard and world.

The figure is thinking of (a) distinct space, distinct from the world it wants to understand, and from which the world is observed and experienced. At the same time it is part of the/that world. ‘Yard and world’ is coexistence. ‘Yard and World’ is monadic and self-referential, it is fluctuating and changeable, a Mobius strip alike. The world contains a yard that contains the world.



Figure 07
The Garden of Eden c. 1410, Tempera on wood, 26,3 x 33,4 cm, Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt,

Her mind focuses on the figure. Is the figure entering the yard?
In being so open and fragile, the outdoor-room proposes to play a mediating role between dweller and passer-by, between project and community, between yard and world.

The figure ‘designerly’ researches the relation between the domain of the dwelling and the domain of the public and wishes to questions our contemporary way of dwelling and explicitly positions the relation between the domain of the dwelling and the domain of the public in the core of the design research. The figure tries to understand and design the ‘moment’ when the private sphere comes in to contact with the public realm. The figure starts to move again and steps forward. Into the yard.

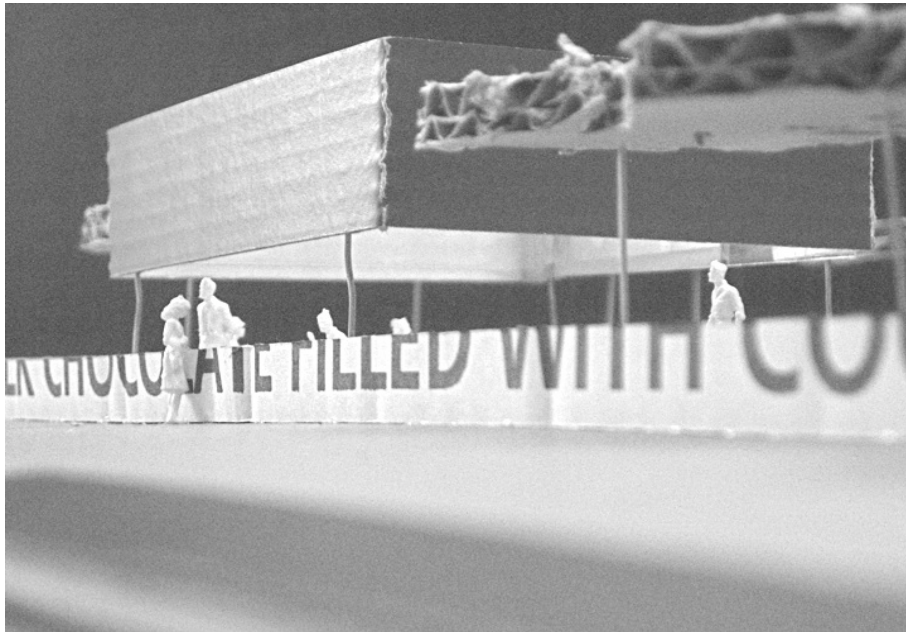


Figure 08
Scene from the (h)Edge, model

Her head tilts delicate, a bit to the right and at that instant she realizes.
The table and chairs remain available in the outdoor-room throughout the year,
She is the figure and the figure is hers.
The outdoor-room was never constructed, as in their mind.

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diensten en van door de overheid gesubsidieerde inrichtingen, verenigingen en instellingen die tot de Vlaamse Gemeenschap behoren.

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Figures

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